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(b) an effective antimicrobial dose of [a therapeutic composition for achieving activity in the oral cavity of the animal, wherein the therapeutic composition contains at least a] one or more cationic antimicrobial substances [and is] in a saliva soluble form positioned close to or at the surface of the carrier, and an alkali metal salt positioned close to or at the surface of the carrier and in an amount effective to promote solubility of the cationic antimicrobial substance in the saliva.

Please delete claim 2 without prejudice to the filing of any appropriate continuation application.

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3. (Amended) The device [A composition] according to claim [2] 1, wherein the [counterion] alkali metal salt is selected from the group consisting of sodium and potassium salts of hydrochloric acid, hydrobromic acid, gluconic acid, and acetic acid.

4. (Amended) The device [A composition] according to claim 1, wherein the one or more cationic antimicrobial [agent] substances are [is] selected from the group consisting of chlorhexidine diacetate, chlorhexidine digluconate, cetylpyridinium chloride, domiphen bromide, benzalkonium chloride, benzethonium chloride, and alexidene.

5. (Amended) The device [A composition] according to claim [2] 1, wherein the cationic antimicrobial substance is chlorhexidine digluconate and the [counterion] alkali metal salt is sodium gluconate.

6. (Amended) The device [A composition] according to claim 1, wherein the carrier is a proteinaceous carrier.

7. (Amended) ~~The device [A composition]~~ according to claim 6, wherein the proteinaceous carrier is a rawhide chew.

8. (Amended) A method for providing dental health in an animal comprising:

(a) obtaining an animal oral care composition including one or more cationic antimicrobial substances in an antimicrobial effective amount and an alkali metal salt in an amount effective to promote solubility of the cationic antimicrobial substance in saliva; and

(b) administering the composition to the animal [in] on a proteinaceous carrier [form] that will be voluntarily chewed by the animal.

Please delete claim 9 without prejudice to the filing of any appropriate continuation application.

93 10. (Amended) A method according to claim [9] 8, wherein the [counterion] alkali metal salt is selected from the group consisting of sodium and potassium salts of hydrochloric acid, hydrobromic acid, gluconic acid, and acetic acid.

11. (Amended) A method according to claim 8, wherein the one or more cationic antimicrobial [agent] substances are [is] selected from the group consisting of chlorhexidine diacetate, chlorhexidine digluconate, cetylpyridinium chloride, domiphen bromide, benzonium chloride, benzethonium chloride, and alexidene.

12. (Amended) A method according to claim 11, wherein the cationic antimicrobial substance is chlorhexidine digluconate and the [counterion] alkali metal salt is sodium gluconate.